December 9, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR: AIS Observers

FROM: David Potter
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: Species Weights Obscons in the Framework 40-A Programs

On Friday, November 19th 2004 Framework Adjustment 40-A to the Northeast Multispecies Fisheries Management Plan was implemented. The intended effect is to provide fishing opportunities to mitigate some of the potential negative economic and social impacts caused by the effort reductions in Amendment 13. FW40-A consists of three programs to allow vessels to use Category B Days-at-Sea (DAS) to target healthy stocks: **Regular B DAS Pilot Program**, **Closed Area I Hook Haddock Special Access Program (SAP)**, and **Eastern U.S./Canada Haddock SAP Pilot Program**. The Eastern U.S./Canada Haddock SAP Pilot Program is a new component to the existing U.S./Canada Management Area. All three programs require a level of observer coverage and the fishermen must call AIS 72-hours prior to leaving on a trip. Fishermen report their daily catches through their Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) and observers must call in a summary of certain catch at the end of the trip. The key species will differ by fishery. Table 1 (below) describes the programs and will help with data quality assurance as trips are observed, obscons are called in, and data are tracked and reported to the NMFS Northeast Regional Office (RO). More information regarding Framework 40-A, can be accessed at: http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/hotnews/Framework40A/.

Training trips should not be done in the Framework 40-A Programs. These programs require critical accuracy of reporting of weights and species identification. All trips in these areas must be readily identified by the appropriate program code, see below. If certified observers do trips in these programs and it is their first trip with this gear type, they should still use code 130, 140, or 150 and record "Training Trip" in the comments of the Vessel and Trip Information Log. Everyone should try to use the same terminology on summary reports, file names, and other communications as:

- **U.S./Canada Area (program code 130)**
- **CAI Hook Haddock SAP (program code 140)**
- **Regular B-DAS Pilot (program code 150)**

Vessels participating in the Regular B DAS Pilot Program may also fish in the U.S./Canada area. Also, vessels may fish inside and outside of the CAI Hook Haddock SAP. Therefore, the program code will be assigned as the vessel owner/captain declared, unless otherwise notified by the RO.

Observer data are used by the RO to compare to the fishermen's catch reports in monitoring Total Allowable Catch (TAC) levels. The observer should strive to record actual weights, especially for the species listed in Table 1. When not able to weigh all the fish, they should weigh subsamples and apply that weight to the entire catch, detailing the methods in the comments. The observer should avoid relying on the captain's estimated weight.

Observers participating in these programs have been asked to tally up the weights of key species (by disposition for the trip) and call them in with their obscon data. There are some details to consider when summing the weights:

- **dressed species weights should be converted to round weights;**
- **only observed hauls should be counted for the species weight summary; and**
- **for U.S./Canada trips, only hauls inside the U.S./Can area should be counted for the weight summary.**

More details are provided below.

Table 1. Programs in Framework Adjustment 40-A and associated fields.

Programs	Program Code	Gear Type	Species to Report	Stat Areas	Con-tract Area	Season	Cover-age Level	Also Called
Regular B-DAS Pilot	150	Any	cod, haddock, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, white hake, winter flounder, witch flounder	Any	Any	By quarter (Nov-Jan, Feb-Apr, May-Jul, Aug-Oct)	50%	Pilot Program B-Day Program
CAI Hook Haddock SAP	140	Hook (010)	cod, haddock	521, 522	27	Oct - Dec	50%	CAI Haddock Hook
U.S./Can ada Area	130	Trawl (050)	cod, haddock, yellowtail	522, 525, 561, 562	06	May - Dec	10% or higher	Eastern Western Yellow-tail CAII Haddock

The trip process -

Fishermen wanting to participate in these programs initially call AIS 72 hours prior to a trip departure. The call-in coordinator works with the area coordinators to assign coverage to meet the required percentage rate and spread the coverage over the fishing areas and evenly distribute coverage among the fleet. AIS notifies the fishermen 24 hours in advance of whether they will take an observer or will get a waiver. The call-in coordinator records the estimated departure date, which vessels have received a waiver, which vessels are assigned an observer, and subsequent cancelled trips. The call-in coordinator sends an excel spreadsheet on a daily basis to NMFS staff at the center, the Regional Office, NOAA Enforcement, and the U.S. Coast Guard to keep track of when vessels can leave and which ones have observers assigned.

When the area coordinator assigns the observer to a trip, they should notify the observer of what program the vessel is participating in, and what the program code is, and the observer should record that in comments on the Vessel and Trip Information Log. At the completion of a trip, the observer must call in their regular obscon and a summary of the catch as requested within 24 hours of the trip landing. Each program has a distinct group of key species (Table 1) that must be summarized by kept and discard disposition for the trip. The weights reported here must all be round weights regardless of how they were recorded during the trip. The proper conversion factors should be used and are listed at the top of the species weights obscon. **The conversion factors are: cod = 1.17, haddock = 1.14, white hake = 1.13.** To help the observer tally the weights and for data quality purposes, a log has been designed for the observer to record the weights by haul which can then be added up at the end of the trip (attached - Species Weights Tally Sheet). **The Species Weights Tally Sheet should be sent in with the trip logs.** The area coordinators email or call the trip obscon and species weights obscon in to Nancy Lee Peltier. Nancy Lee enters the trip data into the regular obscon in oracle and the species information into a species weights obscon excel spreadsheet. DMS is currently designing an oracle-based species weights obscon. Examples of the spreadsheets are attached for each program. Nancy Lee sends the species weights obscon to the Regional Office on Mondays and Thursdays. KB McArdle will serve as a back up if Nancy Lee is on leave. These weights are used to calibrate the fishermen's reports to monitor the Total Allowable Catch to manage the fishery (an example can be seen for the U.S./Canada area at: http://www.nero.noaa.gov/ro/fso/usc.htm).

Once the paper trips arrive in Woods Hole, Katie Sowers initially checks the trips in and starts off the Trip Tracking Log. Once logged in, she notifies Janeen Quintal, Erin Kupcha, Matt Weeks, Amy Van Atten, and Mike Tork and passes the trips to them. Janeen will be the primary person with the others as back up in the order listed. They check the species weights obscons against the trip logs. Any calculation errors are reported to Nancy Lee (and KB for bonus assessment) and she notifies the Regional Office, highlighting the fields that have been recently updated in the spreadsheet. Janeen will also record the Program Code on the Vessel and Trip Information Log next to Project Name, in green pen, and initials it.

Associated files are kept in a network folder on pub called Observer Coverage for the Fisheries Sampling Branch staff.

Attachments: Species Weights Obscon for each program (3)
Species Weights Tally Sheet for each program (3)

Closed Area I Hook Gear Haddock SAP Species Weights Obscon

Weights reported as round weights in whole pounds for observed hauls only inside special access program area.

(To convert the following dressed fish weights to round weights:
for cod, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.17; and
for haddock, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.14.)

Observer Trip ID	Date Received	Cod Kept	Cod Discarded	Haddock Kept	Haddock Discarded

US/Canada Resource Sharing Fishing Program

Weights reported as round weights in whole pounds for observed haul inside special access program area only.

(To convert the following dressed fish weights to round weights:
for cod, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.17; and
for haddock, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.14.)

Observer Trip ID	Cod Kept	Cod Discarded	Haddock Kept	Haddock Discarded	Yellowtail Kept	Yellowtail Discarded

Regular B DAS Pilot Program SAP Species Weights Obscon

Weights reported as round weights in whole pounds for observed hauls only inside special access program area. (To convert the following dressed fish weights to round weights: for cod, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.17; for haddock, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.14; and for white hake, multipy the dressed weight by a factor of 1.13.)

Observer Trip ID	Date Received	Cod Kept	Cod Discarded	Haddock Kept	Haddock Discarded	Yellowtail Kept	Yellowtail Discarded	Am. Plaice Kept	Am. Plaice Discarded	White Hake Kept	White Hake Discarded	Winter Flounder Kept	Winter Flounder Discarded	Witch Flounder Kept	Witch Flounder Discarded

CAI HOOK HADDOCK TRIPS (PROGRAM CODE 140)
SPECIES WEIGHT TALLY SHEET

OBS / TRIPID_____ Date _____/_____/_____ Page_____of_____

NOTE: INCLUDE OBSERVED HAULS IN PROGRAM AREA ONLY

Haul Number	Cod Kept	Cod Discard	Haddock Kept	Haddock Discard

Weights are reported as round weights in whole pounds. Dressed weights MUST be converted to round weights for Cod and Haddock. For Cod, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.17. For Haddock, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.14. PLEASE SHOW YOUR WORK ON THIS SHEET (REFER TO THE EXAMPLE BELOW).

Haul Number	Cod Kept	Cod Discard	Haddock Kept	Haddock Discard
1	50 * 1.17 = 58.5	0	1000 * 1.14 = 1140	75

This example shows that on Haul #1 you observed 50 lbs. of kept Cod (dressed weight), 0 lbs. of discarded Cod, 1000 lbs. of kept Haddock (dressed weight), and 75 lbs. of discarded Haddock (round weight).

US / CANADA AREA TRIPS (PROGRAM CODE 130)
SPECIES WEIGHT TALLY SHEET

OBS / TRIPID_____ Date _____/_____/_____ Page_____of_____

NOTE: INCLUDE OBSERVED HAULS IN PROGRAM AREA ONLY

Haul Number	Cod Kept	Cod Discard	Haddock Kept	Haddock Discard	Yellowtail Kept	Yellowtail Discard

Weights are reported as round weights in whole pounds. Dressed weights MUST be converted to round weights for Cod and Haddock. For Cod, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.17. For Haddock, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.14.
PLEASE SHOW YOUR WORK ON THIS SHEET (REFER TO THE EXAMPLE BELOW)

Haul Number	Cod Kept	Cod Discard	Haddock Kept	Haddock Discard	Yellowtail Kept	Yellowtail Discard
1	50 * 1.17 = 58.5	0	1000 * 1.14 = 1140	75	0	0

This example shows that on Haul #1 you observed 50 lbs. of kept Cod (dressed weight), 0 lbs. of discarded Cod, 1000 lbs. of kept Haddock (dressed weight), 75 lbs. of discarded Haddock (round weight), 0 lbs. of kept Yellowtail and 0 lbs. of discarded Yellowtail.

REGULAR B-DAS PILOT PROGRAM TRIPS (PROGRAM CODE 150)
SPECIES WEIGHT TALLY SHEET

OBS / TRIPID_____ Date _____/_____/_____ Page_____of_____

NOTE: INCLUDE OBSERVED HAULS IN PROGRAM AREA ONLY

Haul Number	Cod Kept	Cod Discard	Haddock Kept	Haddock Discard	Yellowtail Kept	Yellowtail Discarded	Am. Plaice Kept	Am. Plaice Discarded	White Hake Kept	White Hake Discarded	Winter Flounder Kept	Winter Flounder Discarded	Witch Flounder Kept	Witch Flounder Discarded

Weights are reported as round weights in whole pounds. Dressed weights MUST be converted to round weights for Cod and Haddock. For Cod, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.17. For Haddock, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.14. For white hake, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.13. PLEASE SHOW YOUR WORK ON THIS SHEET (REFER TO THE EXAMPLE BELOW).

Haul Number	Cod Kept	Cod Discard	Haddock Kept	Haddock Discard
1	50 * 1.17 = 58.5	0	1000 * 1.14 = 1140	75

This example shows that on Haul #1 you observed 50 lbs. of kept Cod (dressed weight), 0 lbs. of discarded Cod, 1000 lbs. of kept Haddock (dressed weight), and 75 lbs. of discarded Haddock (round weight).